

WEST GERMAN LEADERSHIP VIEWS ON GORBACHEV AND HIS REFORMSEURA/WE/CE,
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West Germany's leaders generally reflect their countrymen's eagerness to promote understanding and detente with the Soviet Union--a desire conditioned by their country's recent history and geographic location--while retaining a distrust--also formed by experience--of the actions and motivations of the leadership in Moscow.

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Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher both view Gorbachev's "reforms" as correctives which they hope will benefit the West by creating a larger market for Western goods, a less belligerent Soviet Union, and extending glasnost to Eastern Europe, but they also believe it is much too early to predict their overall effect. Genscher has been the most out-spoken of the two on the Soviet leader. In a widely-reported speech at Davos on 1 February, Genscher urged the West to encourage positive trends, but "to hold Gorbachev to his word" regarding his domestic and arms control initiatives. More recently, on 26 May, Genscher said that the West has "no reason to be afraid" of Gorbachev's new ideas and apparent flexibility and should also "seek the way to a better future by applying new ideas and new ways of thinking while stabilizing the East-West relationship." Soviet experts in Genscher's foreign ministry have advised him that they believe Gorbachev will probably have until the early 1990's to show domestic and

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foreign successes--otherwise, economic, political, and public pressures could combine to defeat both him and his reforms. [REDACTED]

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Although Chancellor Helmut Kohl's assessment of Gorbachev and his policies has been more guarded, he shares Genscher's fundamental hope that the reforms will lead to liberalization and other benefits for Eastern Europe, especially East Germany. Kohl has pledged that West Germany will be a "reliable partner" to the Soviet Union and his government has recently concluded bilateral agreements for nuclear, agricultural, health, environmental, and trade cooperation with Moscow. At the same time, the Chancellor apparently is concerned that Gorbachev's skillful public relations campaign is undermining West German public support for strong defense policies. Even so, he feels constrained to welcome most Soviet arms control offers--even ones he believes could weaken West Germany's security--in order to avoid appearing to be an obstacle to arms reductions.

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